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Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis
Directorate of Intelligence

ILLEGIB

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20 December 1984

NOTE FOR DCP 607 JAN 1985

For your information. No action required.

Prompted by the recent interest in the state of the insurgency in Afghanistan, we pulled together information collected over the past year on Soviet perceptions of the war. I was surprised to find how much reliable material we have on the views of very senior Soviets.

The attached presents a vivid picture of Soviet frustration. On the other hand, the weight of all our information suggests that Soviet determination remains unswayed and they want to stay the course in Afghanistan.

Director

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Attachments

cc: DDCI, w/att
DDI, w/att
C/DDO/NE, w/att



20 December 1984

Afghanistan: Glimmerings of Soviet Discomfort--1984

[redacted] over the past year provided us with a sizable number of examples of Soviet unhappiness with developments in Afghanistan. [redacted] to some extent reflect normal grumbling. They do not, in our view suggest that the Soviets will not stay the course in Afghanistan. But they show clearly Soviet concern about insurgent effectiveness and frustration at the difficulties in coping with an unconventional war. [redacted]

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Gloom in the Winter

In early January [redacted] already poor morale of Soviet forces was deteriorating, and, despite reports of progress, no end of the fighting was in sight. [redacted]

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-- A working figure for the number of Soviet soldiers killed in the war since the invasion had reached 10,000 to 12,000 men.

-- The Afghan Army was ineffective and untrustworthy.

-- Most soldiers had little idea of what they were fighting for. [redacted]

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[redacted]
of a briefing [redacted]

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[redacted] also painted a vivid picture of Soviet difficulties.

-- Some 150,000 insurgents had infiltrated from Pakistan and Iran since 1979, and the number was increasing each year by 30,000 to 40,000.

-- The insurgents' improved equipment and organization by late 1983 were eroding the advantages the Soviets and their allies enjoyed in firepower.

-- Desertion in the Afghan Army was high and served frequently as a source of manpower supply for the insurgents. There was no hope that the Army could meet its planned strength of 200,000.

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- [redacted]
- Disunity within the Afghan party was so great that Babrak's position would be untenable without Soviet support--a fact that made a political settlement even more remote. [redacted]

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[redacted] indicates that Marshal Sokolov, who was probably sent to Afghanistan to look into the eroding military situation, leveled some tough criticism [redacted]

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- Soviet operations were stereotyped and lacked surprise resulting in unnecessary losses.
- Division commanders and their subordinates were reluctant to assume responsibility.
- Military discipline was poor and attitudes regarding hygiene and medical matters were irresponsible. [redacted]

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Springtime Gains and Disappointments

In April and May the Soviets were able to drive successfully up the strategic Panjsher Valley, but the senior Soviet commanders did not find the situation particularly rosy.

- [redacted] indicated that Marshal Sokolov was concerned about his forces' slow progress up the valley.
- [redacted] the Soviets were disappointed that so few insurgents were killed or captured.

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By the end of spring, the Soviet leaders were becoming increasingly frustrated about the failure of their forces to find Masood.

- [redacted] Chief of General Staff Ogarkov, was informed by field commanders in Afghanistan of the "disasters" suffered by the Soviet and Afghan armies as the result of inadequate or faulty intelligence. General Ivashutin, Chief of the Intelligence Directorate (GRU), was ordered to go to Afghanistan.

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- [redacted] some or the reverses suffered in the Panjsher offensive resulted from poor coordination between units and poor morale in the ranks. [redacted]

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[redacted] officers suggested a growing concern about troop morale. They point to suicides, "accidents" resulting from improper use of firearms, and absences without leave.

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[redacted] excessive use of alcohol and drugs and say several units were temporarily relieved and sent to nearby garrisons for rest and recreation.

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-- Poor morale has long concerned Soviet military authorities in Afghanistan, but this is the first evidence the problem affected an important operation. [redacted]

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We do not know how the Soviet commanders reacted to these criticisms and what they did to remedy their intelligence failures. In any case, Masood remains at large and his forces continue to worry the Soviets. [redacted]

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The Soviet Summer

A spurt of aircraft losses apparently prompted Defense Minister Ustinov to order an investigation.

-- [redacted] about half of the losses occurred because air force personnel in Afghanistan were under great strain or exhausted. [redacted]

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[redacted] Soviet military officers in Moscow took a dim view of the situation in Afghanistan. [redacted] 99 percent of the officers were reluctant to go to Afghanistan. [redacted]

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In Autumn

[redacted] echoed Soviet officers' complaints.

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- He lamented that no one--officer or recruit--understands why the Soviets are in Afghanistan.
- The only safe places in Afghanistan are those which have a high concentration of Soviet troops.
- He complained that the war was useless because it is impossible to fight against the entire Afghan nation, the Babrak regime represents only a minority of Afghans, and the Afghan party is factionalized. [redacted]

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[redacted] Soviet families residing in Kabul were especially concerned about the deterioration in security there. [redacted]

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